From: Seth Breitmiaer <sethsbreitmaier@gmail.com>
Date: September 14, 2021 at 9:14:36 PM EDT
To: mtomasi@colchesterct.org
Subject: Support for Mandating Masks

Dear BOE Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I'm writing to express support for extending mandatory mask use in Colchester Schools beyond September 30th in the event the Governor's executive powers expire/end. Children can't learn if they are sick or not in school. The child health experts in our country agree and have made the following recommendations with respect to wearing masks in schools:

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends universal indoor masking for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends universal masking in school for the following reasons:

    - a significant portion of the student population is not eligible for vaccination
    - protection of unvaccinated students from COVID-19 and to reduce transmission
    - potential difficulty in monitoring or enforcing mask policies for those who are not vaccinated; in the absence of schools being able to conduct this monitoring, universal masking is the best and most effective strategy to create consistent messages, expectations, enforcement, and compliance without the added burden of needing to monitor vaccination status
    - possibility of low vaccination uptake within the surrounding school community
    - continued concerns for variants that are more easily spread among children, adolescents, and adults

Even if you factor in the very small portion of the scientific community who is attempting to make the argument that masks can harm children, there remains little to no credible and/or documented cases where proper mask use has caused significant harm and/or death to children. On the contrary, there have been approximately 500 child deaths from COVID. The number of deaths is not the only metric to evaluate the impact of COVID on children and families. Time out of work is a significant economic consequence in the event a child becomes ill and/or must quarantine. Time out of work and time out of school can impact the child's ability to learn and the family's ability to provide for the basic needs of the household. Post-COVID health (long-haul) struggles remain a significant risk and can impact the health of children and their families for many months.

In February 2020 as COVID was becoming a global threat, one of my children contracted an unknown respiratory disease and struggled to breath for almost two weeks. My child had pneumonia in both lungs. My wife and I took turns spending nights in the hospital as the staff

took steps to help them breathe. We're fortunate our child recovered. I'd like to share with the board that pneumonia isn't simply a two-week ordeal. We had to keep going back to the hospital for repeat chest x-rays to monitor my child's lungs as they healed. It took almost 4 months for the lungs to totally recover. To say the ordeal was frightening would be an understatement. Our community should do everything in their power to ensure children and parents don't have to struggle with a similar experience…or worse.

We need to keep schools open and most importantly we need to keep schools safe. Until the threat of COVID diminishes, I strongly believe schools need to keep mitigation efforts in place, most importantly mandating the use of masks.

Sincerely,

Seth Breitmaier

(Parent of kindergarten student)

References:

CDC Mask Recommendation:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html

AAP Mask Recommendation:
https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-COVID-19-infections/clinical-guidance/COVID-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/

CDC COVID Children Deaths -
https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Provisional-COVID-19-Deaths-Focus-on-Ages-0-18-Yea/nr4s-juj3

Post COVID Conditions (long-haul):
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Flong-term-effects.html